



# Wyoming National Guard RETIREE NEWS

Volume IV, Number 6, Published by Wyo. Military Depart. for Retirees' and Veterans' News, November 2005

## EDITOR'S COMMENTS

At the direction of the Wyoming Adjutant General, starting with the July 2004 issue, the Wyoming National Guard Retiree and Wyoming Veteran's Commission (WVC) publications were combined into one newsletter. First half will always be dedicated to Wyoming National Guard retiree/spouse/widow news and last part to Wyoming Veteran news. The newsletter is published three times a year (Mar, Jul & Nov).

We have received some comments the publication should include descriptive pictures and dressed up with some color. We will always refrain from those items as the intent is not to publish a newspaper or magazine. We only desire to provide informative news and want to use all the space for such, keeping the cost to a minimum. Except for the mailing cost which is covered by the WVC, writing, publishing and handling are accomplished by volunteers.

We have learned there are some concerns and dissatisfaction about credits not be given or shown for articles published. At the advice of the WMD JAGs, lack of credits and sources for each article are covered by the disclaimer and article sources always published in each issue under the publication staff block at the bottom of page 2. Again such practice saves space. It is hoped this explanation covers any past dissatisfactions.

## WY NG RETIRED CAPS

There is an ample supply on hand of the Wyoming National Guard Retired caps for sale by the Wyoming Militia Historical Society (WMHS). The attractive caps are dark brown with the lettering and traditional bucking bronco and rider in gold. Cost is \$10 plus \$2 for mailing. The lettering has either Wyoming Army Guard Retired or Wyoming Air Guard Retired as appropriate. Make \$12 check payable to WMHS and send to Bob Holmes, 2134 North Ramona Ave, Casa Grande, AZ 85222-1325. They are a great gift to give to a new retiree!

## WMHS

Wyoming National Guard historical facts and pictures were printed on place mats used at the Family Readiness Conference held at Casper in August. We enjoyed sharing the facts and Kevin Abel provided the pictures and printing.

The Laramie American Legion had a picture of former WY Adjutant General Walter F. Davis in his Army uniform. We were permitted to get a copy made so we now will be able to update his photo displayed in the Adjutant General's Office Conference room.

Howard Apel of Story, WY, shared his Wyoming State Guard history and pictures. Young boys under service age and men over service age compiled the Home Guard during WWI and the State Guard during WWII. They were provided uniforms and equipment, attended drills and were prepared to defend roads, dams, etc.

General Wright has requested some more WY NG historical facts and pictures of armories, disasters, equipment and airplanes. He plans to use them as a power point presentation during his town meetings. We will provide a nice collection.

Ongoing projects include writing the adjutant general histories, and the inventory of our collection of 5000 items.

2006 WMHS \$10.00 membership dues are due 1 Jan. Send checks made payable WMHS to Don Whitman, 1158 East Arivat Ave, Casa Grande, AZ 85222.

## WY NGA AUXILIARY

WY NGA Auxiliary held a reorganization meeting 1 Oct 2005 in conjunction with WY NG Retiree Conference as several spouses were in attendance for that. A brief history of the auxiliary was shared by those present. LTC Shawn Powell explained his plans and needs for the newly created Youth ChalleNGe program that will state Jan 06. The group decided to meet again in Casper, Aug 06. New Officers are: president-Meg Wright, vice president-Jerri Griego, secretary-Kim Price and Treasurer-Pat Persson.

## WYNGA

An annual meeting was held in conjunction with the Family Readiness Conference in Casper, 12 Aug 05, as will be the practice hereafter. Kent Franklin was elected president, Shawn Powell vice president, Debbie Franck treasurer and Dennis Russell was placed on the Board of Governors. Website [www.wynga.org](http://www.wynga.org) is up and running and the membership is encouraged to utilize it.

Lifetime membership cards have been purchased and WY ANG stamping machine will be used to make the cards. Treasurer reports a total worth \$41,728.12 made up of savings, checking and CDs. Membership approved to provide \$500 to Youth ChalleNGe Program to establish a non profit designation.

13 members and spouses attended the 33rd EANGUS Conference in Orlando, FL 21-25 Aug 05. Included were MG Wright and 3 specially invited enlisted members whose attendance was paid for by authorized federal funds. As a result, WY ANG NCO of the year, TSgt Rigdon and WY ARNG soldier of the Year, SPC Turner were there to receive their awards in person, making that one of the highlights for the WY delegation. Presenters emphasized how important organizations like EANGUS are for the development of an outstanding fighting force. The attendees left with a working agenda for improving National Guard and retiree benefits.

28 members, spouses and guests attended the 127th NGAUS Conference in Hawaii 16-20 Sep 05. LA had one delegate, a retiree. Many accolades were spoken by presenters concerning the National Guard in combat and involvements with the hurricanes. First woman to receive the Silver Star for combat in Iraq was there, an ARNG MP.

All 50 states had committed troops to help with the hurricane disasters. Next years conference was to be in New Orleans. New Mexico volunteered to host in Albuquerque in Sep 06.

## OBITUARIES

Each edition we dedicate this portion of the newsletter to honor those individuals who had service in the WY NG.

**DAVID LOWELL AVERY**, 58, died 15 Aug 05 in Las Vegas, NV of natural causes. He was born 27 Jul 47 in Helena, MT and had served in the US Navy for 3 years, followed by 2 1/2 years in MT ARNG. David joined WY ARNG 18 Sep 76, serving in units stationed at Camp Guernsey and was transferred to the Retired Reserve as SSG 1 Jan 91.

**THOMAS L. BARKER**, 62, died in Sheridan 14 Jul 05 and was born 12 Jul 43 in New York, NY. He served in the Peace Corps in Ecuador during 1965-68. He joined the WY ARNG in Laramie from 28 Aug 68 until 6 May 71 and then joined the WY ANG serving until Aug 74.

**ROY HINES BROWN**, 87, died 27 Jun 05 in Newburg, OR and was born in Cheyenne 14 Feb 1918. Roy joined the 115th Cav Regmt Band, WY NG, 23 Jun 1931 and was mobilized to Fort Lewis in 1940 as the assistant director of the 115th Cav Regmt Army Band. He served as the director of the Army Dance Band while at Fort Lewis. He was separated from active service and WY NG 26 Oct 46.

**ROBERT D. (BOB) BROWN**, 61, died 20 Sep 05 at the VAMC in Cheyenne after losing the battle with cancer. He was born 25 Mar 1944 in Pequannock Township, NJ. Bob was on active duty with USAF/MAC from 26 May 65-27 Nov 68 and USAF Reserve for the next 9 yrs. He joined WY ANG as TSgt and as a full time technician 3 Jun 78. He was promoted to MSgt in Jun 1990 and retired from WY ANG and as an aircraft maintenance supervisor 1 Sep 1996.

**DONALD PAUL ECKHARDT**, 74, died in Santa Fe, NM 19 Sep 05. He was born in Cheyenne 3 Mar 31. Donald enlisted as a recruit in the 67th Army Band, WY ARNG 17 Jan 49 and became a member of HHB 115th FA Gp after progressing through the ranks to SFC. He transferred to the Laramie unit in Aug 56 and was honorably discharged 11 Nov 57.

**PETER J. GOTTFRIED**, 83, died in Jun at Vacaville, CA, but was a former resident of Casper, WY and was born 30 May in Hot Springs SD. He joined the WY NG 115th Cav Regmt Dec 40 so he could be mobilized with them to Fort Lewis Feb 41. He saw WWII combat on

the Solomon and Aleutian Islands. He was discharged from active duty and WY NG 30 Oct 45.

**LIONEL O. (LO) (JOHNNY) JOHNSON**, 85, died of heart failure 1 Oct 05. Lionel Oscar Johnson, known to his many friends as "Johnny or LO" was born 31 May 1920 in Sunrise, WY. During college he learned to fly and earned his private pilot license. He served in the US Navy during WWII being discharged 18 Jan 46. Johnny was the first of the original 40 to enlist in to WY ANG on 2 Aug 46 and was hired as a full time technician. Johnny served continuously in the WY ANG as both military and full time for the next 34 years, rising to the rank of SMSgt and assigned as a flight engineer. He was retired from both the military and civil service at age 60 but continued to be close to the WY ANG operations as a retiree. He will surely be missed for a long time to come.

**ROBERT E. (BOB) JOHNSON**, 66, died 13 Jun 05 in Wheatland after a long battle with cancer. He was born 28 Oct 38 in Wheatland and served in the Wheatland ARNG unit from 19 Sep 56-12 Nov 63.

**ROBERT S. (BOB) JOHNSON**, 83, died 6 Aug 05 at the Casper living Center following a long battle with Alzheimers. He was born 11 Jun 22 in Lovell WY. Bob served in the US Army during WWII from 4 Nov 42-9 Nov 45. He was among the

first to join 960th Ord Co, WY ARNG in Torrington after the war. At the same time he went to work full time as a mechanic at Camp Guernsey. Bob served both as enlisted and warrant officer and retired 10 May 1968 as CW3 after completing over 24 years of service.

**RONALD O (RON) McCORMICK**, 56, died 26 Jul 05 at the VAMC in Cheyenne. He was born 25 Jul 49 in Boulder, CO. He served in US Army from 14 Oct 69-9 Sep 71, USAR 10 Sep 71-7 Aug 73 and NE ARNG 8 Aug 73-5 Nov 84. Ron joined 133rd Engr Co in Wheatland 6 Nov 84 and was transferred to the Retired Reserve as SFC 11 Jan 93.

**JAMES A. (JIM) NISSELIUS**, 60, died 9 Jul 05 at the cancer treatment center in Tulsa, OK. He was born 7 Feb 45 in Springfield, MO and served in US Navy 23 Sep 64-27 Aug 68, USNR 28 Aug 68-22 Sep 70. Jim joined the Gillette WY ARNG unit 14 Nov 89 and remained assigned there until his transfer to the Retired Reserve as SPC 1 May 05.

**JIMMY J. NISWENDER**, 49, died 6 Aug 05 at his home in Laramie after losing the battle with cancer. He was born 29 Jul 56 in Cheyenne. Jimmy was in USMC from 26 Feb 74-29 Jun 76 and served 2 tours in Vietnam, earning the Purple Heart. He joined HHB 115th FA Bde WY ARNG 30 Jun 76 and discharged 26 Mar 84 as SSG.

*Obituaries continued at top of page 3*

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INFORMATION SOURCES: Sources for information being published in this newsletter are gathered from federal, state and private organization publications. Consult with the editorial staff for exact source of data.

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**ELDORE (AL) GILBERT SAYLER**, 65, died 16 Mar 1999 at WY Medical Center in Casper. He was Born 18 Aug 1933 in Menno, SD. He served in the US Navy from 17 Apr 52-16 Apr 56, USNR 17 Apr 56-1 Apr 59. He then joined the WY ARNG in Casper as E2 without break in service on 2 Apr 59. Eldore served continuously with HHB 3/49 Arty, progressing through the ranks to MSG until his transfer to the Retired Reserve on 1 May 82 after completing almost 30 years of service. We regret it took so long to pay tribute to this dedicated soldier.

**RICHARD ALAN (SHAKY) SELBY**, 76, died 20 Sep 05 in Cheyenne after a long illness. He was born 29 Apr 29 in Yoder, WY. Shaky was a typical professional National Guardsman. On 19 Jun 47, he was among the first to join the Torrington unit, 960th Ord Co, after WWII, and was employed as a full time technician at Camp Guernsey. He served continuously there, progressing through the ranks to CW2, until Nov 73 when he was transferred to HHD in Cheyenne as a civil service auditor. He was transferred to the Retired Reserve as CW4 food service technician and retired as GS 10 auditor from civil service on 12 Jul 85, completing over 37 years of continuous civilian and military service.

**JAMES ANTHONY (TONY) SIMON**, 58, died 24 Aug 05 in Cheyenne following an illness. He was born 25 Oct 46 in Cheyenne. Tony joined the 960th Ord Co, WY ARNG, 5 Feb 66 and transferred to the Cheyenne MP unit in 68. He was promoted to SSG 6 Jul 71 and honorably discharged 4 Feb 72 after completing his required obligation. His love for photography influenced him to rejoin WY ARNG 1 Feb 73 as a member of the newly formed PA Det. He left the ARNG on 1 Jan 74.

**KATHERYN L. (KATHY) SOLIS**, 51, died 29 Sep 05 at her home Tacoma, WA, losing her battle with cancer. She was born 27 Dec 1953 in Denver, CO. Kathy enlisted in the WY ANG 7 Jun 75 and went to work full time soon after. She remained in the WY ANG until 4 Dec 92. Kathy then transferred to the USAF Reserve in WA state and remained there until her death, advancing to SMSgt and dedicating 30 years of military service.

**PAT NELSON NEW**, 74, died 3 Aug 05 at his home in CO after losing the battle

with cancer. He was born 14 Aug 30 in Minneapolis, MN but graduated from Cheyenne High School in 1948. He served in USAF from May 52-Nov 54. After that he joined WY ANG as CPT and continued until he was separated as LtCol, 28 May 73, completing 22 years.

**FRANCIS J. (FRANNY) VIOX** 89, died 22 Aug 03. He was born 18 May 1914 in Cheyenne and joined WY NG 1 Jul 32. He was mobilized with WY for WWII as 2Lt. He continued on active duty as a Selective Service officer after the war until he was separated as LTC 31 May 67.

#### MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS (MFH)

Over FY 2005, WY ARNG has participated in 126 MFH across Wyoming. Participation was accomplished by 949 Guard members. 23 soldiers earned their Dress Blue uniforms by participating in 10 individual MFH. Others will earn theirs soon.

Part of the success is attributed to the Partnership Program established between WY ARNG and veteran service organizations (VSO) in the state. 5 VSO have established an agreement with MFH: American Legion Post 6, Cheyenne; American Legion Post 7, Sheridan, VFW Post 2643, Cody; VFW 3558, Wheatland and Natrona County United Veteran's Council, Casper. These VSO receive a \$25 stipend for their participation with WY ARNG for each MFH given. Other VSO throughout the state should contact their local or neighboring NG unit for participation or contact the state director, Jim Burnell (866) 992-7641, ext 5136 or local 772-5136. Coming weeks will find units activated for either War on Terrorism or more hurricane support which diminishes availability of soldiers. We ask for everyone's patience during these times and promise we will hit the ground running when the troops return home.

#### EMAIL ADDRESSES

We continue to utilize email to convey information of an immediate nature. We have nearly 1400 retiree/widow mailings but less than 300 with email. As a result, it is not worth while to send the newsletter by email. Some forget to inform us when they change their address. Notify us at [RHolmes632@aol.com](mailto:RHolmes632@aol.com) if you want to continue or start to be included.

#### LOST BUT NOT FOUND

Many retirees have helped us re-locate individuals we had lost and their assistance is appreciated, but there are still many we cannot find: ARNG - Joseph Brigman, Timothy Carroll, Stephen Davis, Gary Decker, Vincent Defler, Thomas Florence, Gary Kelly, Stephen Kelly, Gary Krause, Michael Lambert, Valerie Martinez, David Odell, Bernard Rivera, Gary Ross, Kathryn Sabo, Dewey Spring, Floyd White and Richard Wilson. ANG - John Akers, David Baker, Deanna Cowan, David Graham, Brenda Hamar, Howard Joy, Noreen Kelly, Don Moore, Jack Morrison, David Rupert, Carol Russell, Gary Schwartz, William Slinger and Brent Stille.

#### HOTLINES

WMD has hotlines located in Cheyenne for answering questions, assisting with processing paperwork, issuing ID cards, etc, for retirees, spouses and widows. They can acquire and complete all forms necessary for processing a claim. Grey area retirees reaching age 60 and spouses recently widowed must utilize this service. ID Cards now can only be issued with the recipient present. Individuals need to contact the hotlines to arrange a time and place for issuing. For ARNG contact: WO Nate Galloway, (866) 992-7641, ext 5238, or 772-5238, [nathan.galloway@wy.ngb.army.mil](mailto:nathan.galloway@wy.ngb.army.mil). For ANG contact: TSgt Angie Bohr, (866) 992-7641, ext 6457 or 772-6457, [angela.bohr@wychevyang.af.mil](mailto:angela.bohr@wychevyang.af.mil).

#### INDEFINITE ID CARDS AT AGE 75

Effective 1 Sep 05, in accordance with federal law, all military spouses and widows, age 75 and over can now obtain the new permanent ID card, regardless if their present ID card has expired or not. Contact the hotlines to arrange issuing.

#### 60 YEAR WY ANG REUNION

Wyoming Air National Guard retirees are again reminded to mark their calendars for 8-9 Sep 06 when the WY ANG will celebrate its 60th birthday. Special hotel/motel rates are being obtained and officially announced later on. Plans are to have a no-host social Friday night, golf tournament Saturday and an evening meal will be catered in the main hanger Saturday evening. Arrangements are being made to have every aircraft flown by WY ANG on display during Saturday.

## GOVERNOR'S MILITARY RECEPTION

A very successful Governor's Military Reception was held Saturday evening 1 Oct 05, at the Hitching Post in Cheyenne. Over 230 were in attendance with over 30 of them retirees and their spouses. Governor Freudenthal was honored for his enthusiastic and dedicated support of the National Guard and their families. MG Wright presented him with the NGAUS Charles Dick Medal of Merit. State Senator Boggs and State Representative Illoway were presented with the NGAUS Patrick Henry Award for outstanding support of National Guard during legislative sessions. All were presented with the WYNGA Medal of Excellence. SMSgt Russ Pollard, WY ANG, was presented with the Heroes Among Us Award for his response to save the life of a motorcyclist involved in Apr 05 accident. Deidre Forster & Jamie Ciz were also recognized for their efforts.

## WY NG RETIREE COUNCIL

There is now officially a WY NG Retiree Council, in accordance with Army and Air regulations, appointed by the joint staff of the WMD and made up of volunteering WY NG retirees. Since it is a joint council for Army and Air, it has co-chairpersons, Bob Holmes for Army and Nick Kricken for Air. The Air Guard representatives are: Rich Ames who lives in Cheyenne, Dick Simmons who lives Colorado and Mel Duncan who also lives in Cheyenne. Army Guard representatives are: Kem Price who lives in Sheridan, Harold Ramirez who lives in Torrington and Ken Persson who lives in Lander. Included on the council as ex-officio, are the full time retiree service officers (RSO), WO1 Nathan Galloway for Army and TSgt Angie Bohr for Air. Their POC are always listed in every newsletter in the article titled "Hotlines." The final member of the council and probably the most important is Larry Barttlebert as recorder and the direct contact with TAG for the council.

Mission and duties of the council are outlined in Army and Air regulations and they are to provide the WY NG retired community and their families with an opportunity to:

1. Communicate with the Active WY NG.
2. Receive advice, analyze and provide input on those decisions, policies and laws that affect the retired community.

3. Review ongoing WY NG programs, proposals, and initiatives and provide retiree council comments on the issues.

4. Institute programs that will create a strong communications link between the active WY NG and retired community.

5. Develop public support for WY NG programs.

The retiree council held its first meeting on Saturday afternoon, 27 Aug 2005, in the Adjutant General's Office Conference room. All member were present with the exception of Ken Persson, who was attending the EANGUS Conference in Orlando. Also the RSO for Air Guard was absent because the position was vacant at the time. The meeting lasted almost 3 hours and each member had input. The council is optimistic about making a contribution to the overall success of the WY NG. However, input is needed from the entire retiree community. Many issues were discussed but those felt to be of the most importance were forwarded to MG Wright and were as follows:

- #1-05. Some verified 20 years service for retirement individuals transfer to the IRR rather than Retired Reserve (RR). RR are continually informed during their grey area time and are notified o/a age 59.5 to submit their application for retired pay at age 60. IRR are not. Recommend a follow up procedure be adopted to insure these grey area retirees in IRR receive all of their benefits.

- #2-05. Retiring WY NG members are not being informed they should attend a retirement seminar which is called Transition Assistance Program (TAP). ARNG holds several TAPs during the year at difference locations in the state. WAFB holds monthly TAPs. ANG does not have a system in place. Recommend TAG requires all ARNG & ANG members to attend a TAP when they retire from active service. It is further suggested a follow up procedure be adopted to notify grey area retirees at age 59 to attend a TAP.

- #4-05. WO1 Galloway needs to provide the ARNG schedule for retirement briefing so the information can be published in the newsletter or by email. WY ANG needs to begin offering briefings.

- #5-05. WY ANG is hiring a new RSO. ANG council members volunteer to help educate the new RSO on retiree issues. Recommend the WY ANG accept the

offer to help educate the new RSO.

#6 & 8-05. Funding is the greatest obstacle to the success of the retiree council. Federal funds are very limited on what can be covered and must come from operational maintenance funds. Under present war time conditions there are no funds left for retiree council. So far, WMD has covered all expense from state funds such as conducting the annual retiree briefing conference. Recommend, if the state accepts the burden of supporting retiree activities, the council must assist in supporting the operational budget by initiating raffles, solicit business sponsors and collect donations. Further recommend TAG convene a group to determine funding sources for retiree activities.

#7-05. It is understood that some grey area retirees are not receiving their Army Echoes or Air Afterburner, a federal published newsletter for military retirees. Recommend the information be published in the newsletter. Information as follows:

Echoes: [Laura.Paul@hoffman.army.mil](mailto:Laura.Paul@hoffman.army.mil) or write: Editor Laura C. Paul, Army Echoes, HQDA DAPE-RSO, Alexandria, VA 22332-0470. No phone available.

Afterburner: HQ AFPPC/DPPRT, 550 C Street W Ste 3, Randolph AFB TX 78150-4713 or [afpc.retiree@randolph.af.mil](mailto:afpc.retiree@randolph.af.mil) or phone (210) 565-2126.

- #9-05. Retirees in most communities get together for coffee daily, weekly, etc. These gatherings can be a great source of grassroots support for WY NG & WMD. Recommend retirees notify Bob Holmes of times and location of their local coffee meetings so it can be published in the next retiree newsletter scheduled for Mar 06. Further recommend the local active NG members be invited to attend.

- #11-05. TAG instructions are the council shall meet twice a year. Recommend the council meet during Saturday afternoon of the WY ANG drill weekend at their Cheyenne dining facility in May and Sep and every retiree be invited to sit in. 2006 meeting dates will be 6 May & 9 Sep.

Closing comments: The council wishes to thank WO Galloway for attending our initial meeting and for providing important insight about his working with ARNG retirees/spouse/widows and the briefing he preforms for members about to retire.



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### 133RD ENGINEER COMPANY

Everybody in Iraq calls them "Cowboys." However, instead of riding horses, they ride earthmoving equipment. The unit has completed 62 projects and moved over 500,000 cubic meters of material since arriving in Iraq. Projects include repairing a leaky wastewater lagoon levy and building 4 new ones; cleared and leveled areas for class 4 storage, new dining facility and new refueling dump. Their operations have been moved from General Support to General Combat Support. They are actively engaged in making the election process safer for Iraqi citizens.

1st Platoon is currently working on the airfield runway repairs.

2nd Platoon is engaged in helping stem the flow of insurgents into Iraq.

3rd Platoon just completed 70% of the work on a water storage lake called "Lake Wyoming."

Unit has been given a tentative redeployment date mid Dec and is making plans for departure and hoping to be home in time for Christmas.

Safety is being stressed more than ever.

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### 2ND BATTALION, 300TH FA REGMT

172 members of the 2-300 FA Bn returned back to WY 10 Apr 05, after being in Iraq from Apr 04 to Apr 05. They were all honored in Aug 05 by Gov Freudenthal and MG Wright for their combat service. It now can be told how dangerous their mission was. They were responsible for protecting the 5 highest officials in the interim Iraq government and it was done without any casualties. On 8 Jul 05, 152 members of the 2-300th FA Bn were alerted to mobilize for Operation Iraqi Freedom. They will be activated for 545 days and report to Fort Lewis in Dec for training before deploying to Iraq for detention operations. The plan is to fill the mobilization order with only soldiers who did not deploy before, however, some who previously deployed may be tasked again.

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### 243RD ATC PASSED IG INSPECTION

243rd Air Traffic Control, WY ANG passed an inspection conducted by USAF Air Combat Command IG. This was the unit's first inspection since activation in 1996. The inspection was a new concept where operational readiness for deployment was evaluated.

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### WY ANG CONTINUES TO ROTATE

WY ANG continues to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. Mission began in Feb 04 and is designed to provide airlift support for US Forces in and out of Iraq. Unit rotates back & forth into Kuwait every 60 days with 31 personnel and a C130 aircraft. Last cycle departed in Aug and returned in Oct with the next cycle leaving in Oct and due to return in Dec. Flexibility to rotate personnel and equipment every 60 days is an important factor in moral of members and it minimizes impacts to families & employers.

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### WY ANG MAFFS ACTIVATED

31 personnel and 2 C130s, equipped with the Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System (MAFFS), were activated and departed 21 Jul for Boise to fight fires in western states. Unit was not deactivated until 10 Sep and during that time they dropped more than 404,746 gallons of fire retardant in 145 sorties. WY ANG is one of 4 units trained to operate MAFFS. Each unit can drop 3,000 gallons of fire retardant in 8 to 10 seconds.

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### 1022D MEDICAL COMPANY

1022d Medical Company, WY ARNG, deployed 30 people and 2 Blackhawk helicopters to Egypt to provide medevac support as part of Operation Bright Star. Operations were conducted during Aug-Oct 05 and are a multinational joint exercise that occurs every few years. Helicopters were loaded onto a Russian Condor at Buckley AFB, CO on 25 Aug. Although the unit has been mobilized for every major combat event since 1990, this was a lifetime opportunity to help support something of this magnitude.

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### WY ARNG SOLDIERS MOBILIZED

In Jul 05, WY ARNG mobilized for 365 days, 16 soldiers to support Task Force Phoenix. They are a part of an embedded training team for the Afghanistan National Army. Soldiers first reported to Fort Carson for pre-deployment training then deployed to Afghanistan to serve as trainers and mentors of senior Afghan Army officials. Once in country the group was split among several locations.

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### COLA FOR 2006

2006 COLA is 4.1%. It will appear on Jan 06 paycheck. Last time COLA was that large was the 5.4% in 1991. That is kinda good news, bad news. Bad news means cost of living has skyrocketed.

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### HURRICANE RELIEF

WY NG was very much tasked in providing relief support for hurricane areas.

WY ANG sent 40 plus personnel and 2 C-130s. Crews flew 61 hours, transported 233 people and moved more than 51 tons of cargo. People transported were treated by 187th Aeromedical Evacuation Sq.

1022d Med Co, WY ARNG, provided 19 personnel and 4 Blackhawk Helicopters. They flew more than 160 hours, providing transporting, search & rescue, hoist rescue and medical aid.

12 members of WY ANG 153rd Security Forces Sq were sent to perform protection for residents and locations.

960th Maint Co sent 61 soldiers and 19 vehicles who performed maintenance of vehicles and equipment in the areas.

84 plus personnel of 1041st Engr Co were sent to provide truck drivers and support.

6 soldiers of Det 1, 111th Press Camp were sent to provide media escort.

WY NG deployed more than 230 people to assist in hurricane relief efforts.

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### WY ARNG MEETS RECRUITING GOAL

WY ARNG surpassed NGB recruiting goal of 1565 and the goal has been met or exceeded for 3 years in a row. WY set its own goal of 1590 and exceed that goal by 2. Army & Air combined strengths exceeds 2600 and that speaks highly for the patriotism of WY.

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### CAMP GUERNSEY EXPANSION

Platte County should see an economy growth of at least \$36 million because of the Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center expansion plans that will occur during the next 17 years.

According to WY Center for Business and Economic Analysis, the county can anticipate an additional \$1.6 million in direct output growth on an ongoing basis after the project is completed.

Other benefits: estimated Guernsey population growth of 83; estimated Platte County growth of 417.

An immediate impact is additional funding being allocated for the Joint Robotics Program in DOD FY 2006 funding.

Congress passed a \$4 million appropriation to Camp Guernsey and University of Wyoming to continue research on the program.

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## RETIREE BRIEFING CONFERENCE

WY NG Retiree Council conducted and TAG WY hosted a very successful Annual Retiree Briefing Conference during 1 Oct. All events were held at the Hitching Post in Cheyenne and in conjunction with the Annual Governors Military Reception. Future plans are to do the same thing each year. The event started with a no-host social Friday evening with about 50 in attendance. First thing Saturday morning about 100 attendees were given a continental breakfast followed by excellent briefing by WMD personnel. COL Sheppard and SCSM Russell updated the group on the status of ARNG and Camp Guernsey; LTC Powell briefed on the new WY NG Youth Challenge Program scheduled to begin at Camp Guernsey in Jan 06; LTC Fuerst gave an updated status of ANG; Col Cieply, ARNG JAG and LtCol Smith, ANG JAG gave a beneficial briefing on retiree legal issues; probably a much needed and highlight was the Triwest representative from Fort Carson, Linda Hood's briefing on Tricare and TFL; and WVC representative Barry Gasdek was there to cover veteran issues. A buffet lunch was served and hosted by MG Wright who also gave a briefing on "What has been accomplished, what is next and how retirees can help." Afternoon was a county fair setting with vendors to answer questions, assist and provide oral and/or written information. Areas represented were:

American Legion Post #6; VFW; Triwest-Tricare/TFL; MOAA with information about supplement health insurance; WY NG Youth Program; Warren Federal Credit Union; Wyoming Veterans Commission (WVC); WAFB 1st Cmd Financial Planning; WY ANG vehicle registration and many tags were issued; WY ARNG ID Card/DEERS where several dependent cards were issued; WMHS who sold several retiree caps and memberships; WAFB retired services; WY NG Youth Challenge Program; Oregon Trail State Veterans' Cemetery. Following are some of the questions submitted with appropriate answers:

Q Buy a new SS drug Card?

A. Not recommended. Any drugs acquired through Tricare/TFL retail network or mail order plan or military facilities or VA have the lowest co-payment in the nation.

Q. What benefits are there for grey area retirees and their family?

A. Grey area retirees and family member have unlimited commissary and PX/BX privileges. They have access to military facilities. Retiree can use Space A in CONUS on military aircraft. Dependents cannot. Only need current ID Card.

Q. How does COLA effect retirees?

A. Military annuities are adjusted annually same as SS or Federal retired pay. COLA based on inflation index during Jul-Sep and applied on Jan pay check.

Q. What is the availability of Federal Long Term Care Plan?

A. It is available for purchase by any retired military. Not to military widows.

Q. What are travel options available for military retirees and/or dependents?

A. Space A available to military retirees receiving retired pay in CONUS and overseas. Spouse can also travel space A in CONUS and overseas only when accompanying their sponsor.

Q. How do I compute my retired pay?

A. Total authorized points earned divided by 360, multiple that figure by 2 1/2% and that times what base pay is at time pay starts for the grade retired at. Example: total authorized points earned 3600, divided by 360 equal 10 years, times 2 1/2% equals 25% of base pay.

Q. Explain how widow age 62 offset is being eliminated and is it retroactive?

A. On 1 Oct 05 pay raised from 35% to 40%; 1 Apr 06 raises to 45%; 1 Apr 07 raises to 50%; 1 Apr 08 goes to 55% where it should have been all the time and what the sponsor paid for. Sorry, no retroactive. However, spouse/widows age 75 and older can immediately be issued a new permanent ID Card.

Q. When is medical coverage effective for dependents of reservists?

A. Spouse is eligible on day sponsor becomes or would have turned age 60. She remains under Tricare until she is 65 and then TFL kicks in provided she has both parts A & B of Medicare.

Q. Why aren't E6 and below invited to Governors Reception?

A. When started in 1954 it was held at the WAFB Officer's Club and only officers were invited. E9s were included when the rank was implemented. Only recently E7s and up were added. Saturation point has been reached. No facility in Cheyenne can handle any more.

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## OPEN ENROLLMENT FOR SBP

Current nonSBP participants may increase or elect coverage during the open enrollment 1 Oct 05-30 Sep 06. A retiree must complete DD 2656-9 and submit to Military Retired Pay. There are interest penalties for the period of non-participation. Open season does not allow participants to eliminate coverage.

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## DFAS MYPAY SYSTEM

Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) has web sites in place that enable military retirees and surviving spouses to access their pay accounts. The system allows the individual to update, make changes, etc, to their pay account. Copies of the 1099Rs can be obtained on line during first week of Dec each year for income tax filing. If you do not have a myPay account established, call DFAS at 1-800-390-2349 to get a PIN. If you already have a myPay PIN but forgot your number, dial the same number to get your PIN reissued. The web sites are: <https://mypay.dfas.mil> or [www.dod.mil/dfas](http://www.dod.mil/dfas). Once MyPay access is selected, DFAS must be notified at (800) 321-1080 if you desired hard copies of pay forms to be provided.

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## SOME MEDICATIONS COST MORE

Tricare has a third tier drug level called non-formulary (more expensive). 3 medications have been placed in the non-formulary category, Nexium for stomach problems/ulcers; Teveten and Teveten HCT for high blood pressure. Beneficiaries will pay \$22 for both a 30 day supply from Tricare Retail Pharmacy or for a 90 day supply from Mail Order Pharmacy. In no net work retail pharmacies, copayment will be \$22 or 20% of the cost, whichever is higher. Third tier drugs will not be stocked in MTFs.

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## ASSISTED COMMISSARY SHOPPING

A DOD directive has been issued that makes assisted commissary shopping possible for disabled customers. Any authorized shopper who needs help to shop can have a caregiver appointed as an agent. The agent does not have to be an authorized commissary shopper. Designee should contact the installation ID Card issuing section to determine what legal documents are needed, such as power of attorney, to establish caregiver status and what they need to gain access to the commissary.



# WYOMING VETERANS' NEWS

*Furnished by the Wyoming Veterans' Commission*



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## POINTS OF CONTACT

Wyoming Veterans' Commission (WVC) has offices in both Cheyenne and Casper. Points of Contact are:

Don Ewing, WVC Director, cell: (307) 259-3487, email: [wvac@bresnan.net](mailto:wvac@bresnan.net)

Barry Gasdek, Veteran Service Officer, cell: (307) 262-0128, email: [wvac@bresnan.net](mailto:wvac@bresnan.net)

Shawna Melendez, Executive Assistant, (307) 772-5016, email: [smelen@state.wy.us](mailto:smelen@state.wy.us)

Casper Office: Wyoming Veterans' Commission, % LTC Hardy V. Ratcliff Armory, 5905 CY Ave, Casper, WY 82604  
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email: [wvac@bresnan.net](mailto:wvac@bresnan.net)

Cheyenne Office: Wyoming Veterans' Commission, % Wyoming Military Department, 5500 Bishop Blvd, Cheyenne, WY 82009-3320  
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## INCREASE NEWSLETTER MAILINGS

Wyoming has 57,800 veterans or one out of every six Wyoming adults. That is about 16% of the population. Add in family members and it is over 32%. This newsletter reaches most of the Wyoming National Guard retirees but it is only being sent to about 1300 veteran addresses. Some of those mailings include all of the veteran organizations and state legislators. Wyoming Veterans' Commission (WVC) is tasked by state law to serve all veterans. WVC desperately needs help in spreading the word. If readers of this newsletter are aware of any veteran or surviving spouse who are not receiving or would like to receive this newsletter, please forward their full name and mailing address to:

Wyoming Veterans Commission  
5500 Bishop Blvd  
Cheyenne, WY 82009-3320

or call: 1-800-992-7641, ext 5016 or in Cheyenne: (307) 772-5016

or email: [smelen@state.wy.us](mailto:smelen@state.wy.us) or [wvac@bresnan.net](mailto:wvac@bresnan.net)

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## PLEASE HELP SPREAD THE WORD!

### ACCESS DD - 214 ONLINE

National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has provided a website for veterans to access a copy of their DD-214 online at: <http://vetrecs.archives.gov>. Military veterans and the next of kin of deceased former members of the military can use the webpage to obtain copies of documents from archived files. Next of kin can be the following: surviving spouse that has not remarried, father, mother, son, daughter, sister or brother. Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the SF 180 which can be downloaded.



## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Last couple of months have been quite hectic. In Aug, Governor Freudenthal appointed 7 new commissioners. I have been frantically working to put together a meaningful commissioner's booklet that covered the main areas of our mission and projects, as well as receiving a very large number of emails from 3 interested VFW commission members.

One issue that needs our constant attention is some returning Guard and Reserve soldiers that meet the qualifications who were denied their Veterans Tax exemption. It took some detective work to find the source of the misunderstanding. It was amicably resolved after the Revenue revised some subtle interpretations, with help from our attorney general's office,

State Veterans Nursing Home Study is progressing well. The study group submitted its final report, which the commission will review at the 24 Sep quarterly meeting and hopefully will send it to the Joint Labor, Health and Social Services (JLHSS) Committee before 1 Oct 05. A formal presentation of the plan will be made to the JLHSS committee in Oct. Some of the findings were:

There are 2 separate delivery systems for WY veterans. System established by VA is the most known; however, 60% of our veterans are not taking advantage of this system; many are not eligible. Many veterans are receiving services from non VA sources through the state of WY. The 2 systems differ in their approach. VA system is more "facility based" where the veteran must travel to a VA hospital or clinic. The non VA sources include extensive in home and community based components. Both systems are important to our veterans.

Communication between the two systems need much improvement. Across the state, 6 "focus group" meetings were conducted with much discussion and information arising from these groups and individual veterans. Several expressed the opinion that many veterans are not fully aware of the services offered, especially the non VA sources.

The study identified numerous service delivery gaps in WY. Most of the gaps are in specific geographical areas, but some are more widespread resulting from lack of funding.

To deal with the issues, the following

actions are recommended:

1. Improve coordination and communication between VA and non VA programs.
2. Improve veteran access to information about what services are available.
3. Expand the Medicaid Long-Term Care waiver, Medicaid Assisted Living Facility waiver, and the Community-based In-home services program so veterans will have better access to these programs.
4. Encourage VA to expand the delivery of in-home services.
5. Expand the availability of veteran's nursing home services by one of three methods (listed in order of priority):

- \* Seek authorization from the State Veterans Home Construction Grant program in Washington DC to initiate a pilot project whereby WY would utilize that grant to contract for nursing home services rather than build a state run nursing facility.

- \* Encourage the Cheyenne VA and Sheridan VA to greatly expand their contract Nursing Home programs.

- \* Apply for funding to construct a State Veterans Nursing Home at a yet to be determined place.

July found me making presentations to the Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee and the Air Force Association. That same week I had a couple conversations trying to help a parent of a soldier killed in Iraq. We met several times on a draft of memorandum of understanding for the veterans outreach services to be provided to the veterans as well as define the responsibilities of the WVC and WY Military Department.

Now, with a consultant working on the Veterans Nursing Home program, we held 6 focus group meetings across the state where we accumulated information and suggestions. General Wright and I met with the Governor, who gave us a great deal of encouragement and went over our budget and bills. At the end of the month we wound up in the swirling tornado called CFD.

July 4th, Barry and I set up a booth at Laramie's "Freedom has a Birthday" event where we talked to and helped 162 veterans. Plus we had 25 veterans comment on how we had helped them in the past. We also had lots of help from the American Legion, wives and family members.

Aug started out with completion of the Strategic Plan. I attended a focus group meeting in Riverton at the Vets Nursing Home. I worked up a grant request to fund some commission training that was not covered in the budget.

Aug. 11th, Department of Parks and Cultural Resources met with me, Museum Advisory Board and a number of legislators to hammer out the transition of WY Veterans' Memorial Museum to Parks and Cultural Resources. Next day I attended the Cheyenne Military Affairs Committee meeting at the VA Hospital. Following Monday we held a group meeting on the Veterans' Nursing Home study and worked on the recommendations received. I also briefed a number of legislators and key persons on veteran bills and their implications. After that, I attended the National Association of State Directors of Veteran Affairs in Seattle where we were briefed on what other states are doing to help veterans as well as a very large number of updates and interpretation of current VA changes. 15 Aug the Governor appointed 7 new commissioners and reappointed 5 returning members. My task is to bring all commissioners up to speed on what has been done and what is needed while reaching a consensus.

I make it a policy to have breakfast, lunch or dinner with the commissioners and solicit their input whenever I am in their area.

Month of Sep has been a full time effort assimilating pertinent information for the commissioners booklet. There are large numbers of projects and proposals that can positively affect veterans that need to be dealt with.

I have good news for the veterans in the southwest corner of the state. A new community Based Outreach Clinic is now in Rock Springs and managed by the Sheridan VAMC. We are looking forward to a large number of veterans accessing services they never knew existed or were geographically located too far from a VAMC/clinic.

Sep 29-30 made presentations to the Joint Interim Transportation Committee in Casper.

First quarterly meeting of the newly formed commission was held 24 Sep. New officers were elected.

*(Directors report continued on next page)*



*Director's report continued:*

Patty Burgin, Sweetwater County Veterans Service Officer and representing District 3, was elected Chairperson.

Jana Ginter of Carpenter, District 1, was elected vice chairperson.

Lars "Pete" Quinnell, of Gillette representing District 6, elected secretary.

Several issues were brought up and committees appointed, with much action due immediately. Another commission meeting was held on 22 Oct. Summaries of the two meetings will be released around the first of Nov 2005.

A correction needs to be made to a statement made in the last interim newsletter sent by email. Commission's positions on the bells was misquoted.

A motion was made and it passed: "Recommend to the Governor the original bells be returned to the village of Balangiga, Philippines, and duplicates be made of the bells to be place in a suitable place in WY."

#### **VETERAN SERVICE OFFICER REPORT**

July started off with a bang. Last four years we have set up a veterans assistance table on 4th of July at Washington Park in Laramie. It was a huge celebration this year with Veteran Honor Guards, programs, music, community input and numerous booths throughout the park. Normally our Veterans Assistance Table is located with the other veterans groups, i.e., American Legion, VFW, Marine Corps League, etc., It was estimated by the Jubilee Days committee there were over 5,000 participants.

There are about 2,908 veterans in Albany county and BSO i.e., AL has 400, DAV 100, VFW 380, UWS about 431 in various categories. I was able to gather names of 143 veterans, many of which had a spouse and children with them. I probably spoke to another 15-20% who stopped by but did not give their name. All vets that stopped by were thanked for their service and given handouts, pamphlets, forms, etc, needed for health care and benefits. Cookies were available, donated by a local restaurant.

Any vet who had visited in the past years were complimentary of VA Health Care, VA prescriptions and benefits received. Some had claims, appeals adjudicated by the VA and some had never received any type of benefits. A few, of course, had never forwarded any paperwork and were not enrolled in the VA Health Care

system. I did let them know that they did need to send the forms in before they could get the benefits. Several inquires required follow-up and a few called to request more information later month.

Visits were also made to Gillette, Cheyenne, Glendo and Laramie. I attended the Military Order of the Purple Heart convention in Springfield, MO, and the CVSO training in South Dakota. Purple Heart recipients are Priority Group 3 in the VA Health system and may be eligible for Combat Related Special Compensation if they meet certain criteria.

First part of Sep I traveled to Cheyenne, Pine Bluffs, Laramie and attended the VAVSO meeting at the Cheyenne VAMC and Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve Conference in Cheyenne. I attended the Homeless Veterans Stand down at the Old Train depot in Cheyenne. I encouraged veterans to sign up for VA Health Care, if they are not already receiving it and benefits, if they thought they may have some service connected injury or disease. Some vets were interested in the State Veterans Home and VA facilities, such as the Vet Center. I attended 9/11 ceremony at Post #2 American Legion in Casper and participated in their flag disposal ceremony. I attended the Casper Military Affairs meeting sponsored by the Casper Chamber of Commerce and VFW District meeting in Rawlins. I visited Wamsutter, Rock Springs, Mountain View and Lyman. I had a chance to assist veterans, hand out information in the local senior centers. Finally, I attended a Veterans Coffee meeting in the Albany County Senior Center and received some good information on veteran's service and had a chance to network with local vets.

A copy of my planning calendar for the remainder of this year has been sent to all the commissioners, AL, DAV, VFW, DOL-Vets, Workforce Service, Cheyenne and Sheridan VAMCs, WMD, Military Affairs Committees, and it should be posted on their bulletin boards. My schedule for first quarter in 2006 will be mailed o/a mid Dec 2005.

Vets contacted were interested in VA health care, tax exemptions, vet homes, vet cemeteries, education benefits, Guard and Reserve benefits, claims & pensions, DD-214, survivor benefits & awards, etc.

#### **FEDERAL FUNDS ADDED FOR VA**

Congress approved and 2 Aug the president signed a bill to provide an extra \$1.5 billion for veterans' health care programs to cover the budget shortfall. The additional money was needed to correct VA underestimating the number of veterans seeking care as well as increased costs of treatment and long term care. The increase brings the VA total FY 2005 budget to over \$28 billion. VA has also requested an additional \$1.9 billion for FY 2006 and Congress has pledged to ensure VA health care is fully funded.

#### **VA PENSIONS AT AGE 65**

Many veterans receive a non-service connected pension from VA based on reaching age 65. Veterans who are under 65 qualify if they are permanently and totally disabled. For disabled veterans, the disability does not have to have any relationship to the veteran's military service. Eligibility for non-service connected pension requires you to have served during a specific period of war such as WWII, Korea, Vietnam, etc. Eligibility is also based upon need, and a veteran is generally eligible if he or she has less than \$80,000 in net assets. The home and 1 vehicle are not counted in determining assets. Annual income must be below certain limits. For 2005 maximum benefits for a single veteran is \$846 per month. If the veteran has a spouse or other dependent, maximum amount is \$1,109 a month. In determining eligibility and the amount of the benefit VA subtracts any income, such as Social Security or retirement benefits the veteran and his dependents receive from the maximum amount.

#### **FREE WY LICENSE PLATES**

Effective 1 July 05, under a new law, state of Wyoming allows veterans, with a 50% VA disability or more, to obtain a free set of license plates each year for one vehicle. The veteran must obtain a letter of eligibility from the veterans benefit section of a VA hospital and meet the following criteria:

1. Have been a WY resident for at least 45 days.
2. Have a current WY driver's license.
3. Must have proof of residency.
4. If mailing address is post office box, you must show a utility bill to prove you live in an established residence.

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## MILITARY EASES PTSD PROBLEMS

10 to 20% of the thousands of war veterans will develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This is a psychiatric disorder that occurs after a life threatening event such as personal assault, natural disaster or military combat. The effects of the disorder can be debilitating with symptoms ranging from severe nightmares and flashbacks to insomnia and increasing social isolation. In recent years, the focus of the military has been on the rising occurrences of combat related disorders as more and more troops return from war. To start the healing process, psychiatrists recommend a variety of methods such as relaxation techniques, sleep strategies and in some cases, medication. Each military branch has programs and VA offers free counseling sessions. Contact your nearest VA representative for more information on VA assistance for PTSD.

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## CONTACT FOR HURRICANE VICTIMS

VA has set up a toll-free number for veterans who normally receive health care at VA facilities in New Orleans, Gulfport and Biloxi and it is (800) 507-4571. The number can also be used by family members concerned about the location of veterans who were hospitalized at these facilities. Gulfport facility has been closed, New Orleans Medical Center has been evacuated. Biloxi facility is still operational. Number will be staffed for the duration of the emergency. Call to find out about how veterans evacuated from the storm area can receive health care, prescription drugs and any other health care question. Number can be used to locate evacuated VA patients.

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## VA ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for most VA benefits a person must have served in the United States Armed Forces during peace time or war time for at least one day prior to 7 Sep 1980 and received better than a dishonorable discharge. After that date a Veterans must have 24 months or more of continuous active duty service to be eligible for VA health benefits. Exceptions are reservists called up for active duty by the president and completed that active service. One exception to that rule is the reservists who completed the required active duty for training upon enlistment. This service is not creditable.

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## VA MEANS TEST

VA Health Care System is scrutinizing the Means Test closely for declared income figures. They are comparing them against IRS Income Tax information.

Most veterans who are less than 50% service connected disabled must report their financial income, medical deductions and cash and property assets each year to maintain eligibility for VA health care benefits. The information should come from your previous income tax report, and is based on the gross income, not net or adjusted income.

You may have not received notice from VAHC system to provide a Means Test, but you are still required to annually provide the information. VA could deny your health care services if you do not provide the information.

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## SURVIVOR BENEFITS WEBSITE

VA has created an Internet website for surviving spouses and dependents of military personnel who died on active duty and for the survivors and dependents of veterans who died after leaving the military.

"One of VA's basic missions is care for the survivors of veterans and military members. By harnessing the power on the Internet, we provide them with the latest information about benefits in a clear, readable format," said Honorable R. James Nicholson, Secretary for VA.

Website is organized into broad categories, death in service and death after service. It provides visitors information about a wide range of benefits for the surviving spouse, dependent children, and dependent parents of deceased veterans and active duty personnel.

The website can be found at: <http://www.vba.va.gov/Survivors> or by clicking the "Survivors Benefit" button at: [www.vba.va.gov](http://www.vba.va.gov). The monetary benefit breakdown can be accessed at <http://veterans.senate.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=Newsroom.PressReleasesid=171>.

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## DISABILITY BENEFITS COMMISSION

Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission established by Congress to review benefits going to veterans and survivors began work in May. People interested in presenting testimony should contact the panel at (202) 273-7509 or email [vetscommission@va.gov](mailto:vetscommission@va.gov).

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## MILITARY HONORS

Military Funeral Honors (MFH) program has received good news pertaining to payment of federal dollars to veteran service organizations (VSO). A federal program has now been established in WY where federal money can be given to support VSO when they participate in a partnership with WY Army National Guard (ARNG) in conducting MFH.

Federal law dictates that all the military service will provide military honors to families of eligible veterans on request. Law further dictates that military honors will include folding of the flag, presenting of the flag and playing of taps at a minimum. Equally important is a provision in the law which requires the participation of at least two military personnel at all military honors. WY ARNG is prepared to work with all VSO in providing military member for these services. MFH may include additional services when resources allow.

In response to the law, WY ARNG has established eight area coordinators around the state to work with funeral directors and VSO in conducting MFH. Coordinators are located in Cheyenne (286-0645), Wheatland (331-4243), Sheridan (752-1971), Lovell (254-1119), Worland (431-5784), Riverton (851-3967), Rock Springs (679-3865), and Casper (262-7370).

There are federal funds available to pay a \$25 stipend to a VSO who works with the WY ARNG. These federal dollars are in addition to and separate from any state monies already available. Prior to the joint participation and payment, a simple Blanket Purchase Agreement must be established. State MFH Coordinator will complete the necessary paperwork and WY ARNG soldiers will submit the reports which entitle the payment to the VSO. All that is required of the VSO is a partnership program with the WY ARNG.

The National Guard in your community or nearby community is asking for you to call them and include them in your planning and conducting of military honors.

The federal Military Funeral Honors program is headed by the State MFH Coordinator Jim Burnell at the Wyoming Military Department in Cheyenne. His phone numbers are toll-free (866) 992-7641, ext 5136 or (307) 772-5136 or cell (307) 286-0221.

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## ELKS HELP VETERANS

The following proclamation was issued by the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks:

Whereas: The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks made a solemn pledge! "So long as there are veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them."

Whereas: The fulfillment of this pledge is the obligation of every Elk, as set forth in Section 4.290 of the Laws of the Order, and

Whereas: Serving our nation's veterans is an expression of patriotism in its purest sense:

Now, therefore: By virtue of the authority of the office of Grand Exalted Ruler, I hereby proclaim the month of November as, "National Veterans Remembrance Month;" and request all lodges to observe this month of recollection of the debt we owe to all veterans in the manner which has been recommended by the Elks National Veterans Service Commission in its communication to all Lodges.

Signed: Louis J. Grillo, Grand Exalted Ruler

A survey of Volunteer Veterans Service Programs for Fraternal Year April 1, 2004 - March 31, 2005 was compiled by the Office of the Grand Secretary. This survey showed the contributions made to veterans as follows:

|                |                     |
|----------------|---------------------|
| Cash           | \$2,294,100.00      |
| Non-Cash       | \$3,383,221.00      |
| Hours worked   | 15,194,860.20       |
| Miles traveled | <u>1,301,726.00</u> |

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|                     |                |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Total contributions | \$5,677,321.00 |
|---------------------|----------------|

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## PASSPORT INFORMATION

Originally, new passport requirements called "Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative" were to be effective 31 Dec 2005. That timetable has been revised. Effective 1 Dec 06, a passport is required to or from Canada, Mexico, Central/South American, Caribbean and Bermuda. Beginning 1 Dec 07 passport requirements are extended to include all land border crossings to or from above mentioned destinations.

## VA PRESCRIPTION FRAUD ALERT

It has been reported that veterans are receiving calls from a company identifying itself as the "Patient Care Group." This company is claiming veterans' prescriptions are now being dispensed through them and if the veteran wants to continue to receive their medicines, they would need to provide a credit card number. Veterans are to be advised that the VA HAS NOT changed the process of receiving and dispensing prescriptions. Veterans are also advised never to give out their personal information, including social security numbers and credit card numbers to any organization without first verifying their legitimacy. If you feel you may be a victim of this scam contact your local VA representative or visit the following website: [www.consumer.gov/idtheft/lawresources.htm](http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft/lawresources.htm) to find out where to contact the appropriate law enforcement agency.

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## AGENT ORANGE

Agent Orange as it related to Vietnam has been fought in two phases. First was the actual combat during 1960s and early 1970s. Second phase came in the late 1970s and 1980s, when concerns about herbicide's effects arose and federal government, citing lack of hard evidence, offered no compensation to those concerns. A class-action lawsuit against the manufacturers was settled out of court in 1987 for \$180 million.

Accusations of government cover-ups swirl around studies that attempted to determine the health effects of Agent Orange. They became moot points in the early 1990s when the VA and congress presumed all military members serving Vietnam were exposed and subjected to health conditions that could be related to Agent Orange. If a Vietnam veteran became ill with one of the listed health conditions, the veteran might be entitled to disability compensation.

VA takes its lead from the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine, which provides regular comprehensive reports to the VA, reviewing medical literature about human health effects from exposure to chemicals used in the herbicides. If the literature indicates there is an association between exposures to these agents and some health outcome, then the Institute of Medicine documents that for VA and

VA then decides what to do about the results.

The VA now links 12 diseases to Agent Orange. They and their symptoms are: Chronic lymphocytic leukemia- increased fatigue, incidence of infections, shortness of breath, weight loss; Chloracne- oily skin, excessive blackheads and pimples; Diabetes- blurry vision, excessive thirst and hunger, frequent urinate, increased fatigue, irritability and weight loss; Hodgkin's disease- increased incidence of infections, painless swelling in the neck, collarbone region, armpits or groin, severe itching and shortness of breath; Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma- same systems as Hodgkin's disease; Multiple myeloma- bleeding in the nose or gums, bone fractures, bone pain-especially in the back and ribs spreading through the body, easy bruising and increased fatigue; Porphyria cutanea tarda- changes in pigmentation, increased hair growth, increased iron levels in the liver which also leads to liver disease and severe blistering and scarring of exposed skin; Peripheral neuropathy- chest pains, abnormal blood pressure, loss of coordination, muscle weakness and numbness, tingling and burning sensations or sharp pain in the body; Prostate cancer- blood in urine or semen, burning while or difficulty urinating, difficult or painful erections and pain in lower back, hips or thighs; Respiratory cancers- bloody spit, fatigue, weight loss, persistent hoarseness and coughing, shortness of breath and swelling of the neck and face; Soft tissue sarcomas- blockage in the gastrointestinal system, dull or persistent nerve or muscle pain and painless lumps anywhere on the body; Spina bifida- effect children born to Vietnam veterans. These children are eligible for disability benefits including health care services and vocational training and rehabilitation.

By the fact veterans served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1975, it is presumed by VA they were exposed to Agent Orange. Same presumption exists for veterans serving in Korea from 1968-1969. If any veterans who served in the Vietnam War notices any of the above symptoms they should immediately visit their nearest VA medical facility or have their own doctor examine them with an eye toward one of those service-connected conditions.



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### NEW BANKRUPTCY LAW

Premature death, divorce, small business failure, etc, can all lead to bankruptcy. Approximately 1.6 million Americans filed for bankruptcy in 2004. Personal bankruptcy comes in two forms: Chapter 7, completely eliminates debt and Chapter 13, reorganizes the debt into a repayment plan. A new law, effective 17 October 2005, makes it more difficult to file for a Chapter 7. Changes are:

Means Test: Income above state median for family of 4, able to repay \$6000 or more over 5 years, or if \$100 a month left after court-approved expenses, must choose Chapter 13.

Debt counseling: Filer must obtain and show proof of credit counseling within 180 days of filing.

Credit card purchases: Repay all credit card purchases within 90 days of filing.

Homestead exemption: Requires a two-year residency program to qualify for a full homestead exemption.

Autos: Must repay an auto loan or surrender the vehicle.

Retirement funds: Debtor receives full protection for IRAs and Roth IRAs up to \$1 million.

### BATTLE OF THE BULGE

Obesity among Americans has skyrocketed in the past 4 decades. 2 of 3 are overweight and 1 in 3 are obese. Among VA veterans, 68% are overweight and 37% obese. Obesity increases risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and arthritis. An estimated \$11 billion is spent annually in the United States to treat weight related problems in those with severe obesity. What is obese? Doctors use body mass index (BMI), a ratio of weight to height, to define obesity. You can determine BMI by multiplying your weight in pounds by 704.5, divide the results by your height in inches, and divide that, once again by your height in inches.

BMI between 25 to 30 is considered over weight. A BMI of 30 or greater is obese. Severe obesity is marked by a BMI of 40 or higher which is at least 100 pounds or more above healthy weight. Genetics are a great influence but exercise, diet and lifestyle habits are critically important. Eat right and exercise are the first line of defense.

Readers should seek advice from their physician.

### TO YOUR HEALTH

Fat, we all want to lost it. Almost everyone strives for a healthy diet, whether it's low fat, low-carb or low cal. Nutritionists recommend no more than 20 to 35% of total calories come from fat, with less than 10% total calories in saturated fats which most often come from animal products. Though some fat is needed to assure adequate intake and absorption of fatty acids and fat-soluble vitamins, too much fat in our bodies is unhealthy and can contribute to high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, some cancers and other diseases.

It is fairly easy to control ingredients when cooking at home from scratch and reduce the amount of fat in foods.

However, most food products are labeled with nutrition facts that can provide plenty of useful information. Most of the recommended maximum amount labeling is based on a 2,000 calorie-a-day diet.

Prepared foods often are 30 to 50% fat. It might not be a bad idea to ask if nutritional information is available before you order.